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ABSTRACT

The guide for teachers of English as a Second Language offers practical advice on the format and layout of instructional materials they produce using desktop publishing technology. An introductory section discusses important design considerations for producing effective materials. Subsequent sections describe how to: organize ideas; outline the text; choose an overall style; design the page; select a type design and page format specifications; organize text for visual effect; select or write text; and choose illustrations. Samples of materials are provided, including a glossary, a map, a chart or graph, simple text, a lesson page, and a page from a student-designed book. (MSE)

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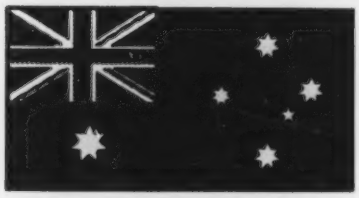
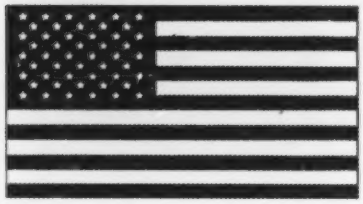
Desktop Design for ESOL Teachers





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Introduction

Why should you be interested in graphic design?

Good teachers have always written their own materials, both because they want to supplement existing texts and because they can't find material that covers what they need to teach. With desktop publishing equipment becoming more and more affordable and easy to use, teachers can exploit this new technology to create their own materials. Some will be interested in publishing their materials as well, making them available to other teachers.

The way printed material appears on the page has a great deal to do with whether it works or not. When the reader picks it up, it must look inviting, well-organized, and appropriate to his needs, or he may put it down. If the reader is a student who is required to read the material, she may do so reluctantly. Well-designed instructional materials motivate students to use them, while materials that are unorganized, poorly designed, and illegibly printed distract and anger their readers.

If you decide to produce your own material, it's just as important to think about how it looks as what it says. You wouldn't write something for your students without organizing your thoughts, so if you learn to add design skills to your efforts at producing your own materials, you can produce materials that are twice as good.

What are the most important design considerations for ESOL materials?

Good instructional materials are written and designed for a specific audience. Experienced teachers may already know how to write appropriate materials for their students, but probably don't know how to present the material in the most effective way. Design rules, however, don't exist separately from the text. The writing and the design must be thought out together, as a unit, in order to create the most effective materials. The following basic process applies to any writing and publishing project:

1. Organize your ideas.
2. Design the best way to present them.
3. Use your design to guide your writing.

And finally, when you get ready to print, choose a reproduction method that doesn't break up letterforms. If possible, use a laser printer and a high-speed photocopier.

Organize your ideas

WHO is your Audience?

How old are the students?

What is their reading level?

What is their family educational background?

What is their cultural background?

What are their interests?

WHAT is the Task?

What do you want them to do?

WHAT are your Objectives?

Why do you want them to do it?

Outline the text

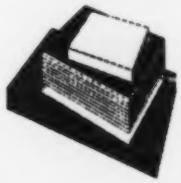
The first step in designing materials is to organize your thoughts about what you are writing. Outline the text, decide what you want to say and how you want to say it. Plan how long you think it should be.

1. **Group information.** Working with a word processor or pencil and paper, separate ideas into logical groupings.

2. **Separate into sections.** Divide main ideas into further sections.

3. **Identify lists.** Some material may not lend itself to paragraph format. If you think lists are the best way to present the information, decide if the order the items are listed is important. Use bullets for no particular order, and numbered lists when order is important.

Choose a style



Now you have a pretty good idea of what you need to put on paper. You know how many main sections you have, how many subheadings you need to make the material most understandable, and how many lists you need. Depending on your audience, task, and objective, decide how you want it to look on the page. The next few pages will present some of the basics you need to understand to make design decisions.

Design the page

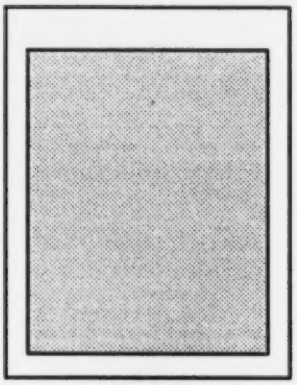
Size

Most of the time you will use 8 1/2 by 11 inches. Most laser printers will only print this size. If you need to use smaller or larger sizes, the most economical way is to choose half size (4 1/4 by 5 1/2 inches) or ledger size (11 by 17 inches) sheets.

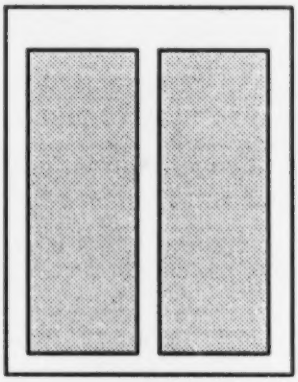
Grid

Decide how your text will best fit on the page. If you are using an 8 1/2 by 11 page, a single column is usually too wide for reading text comfortably. It may be all right for fill-in-the blank exercises, especially if the type size is large and there is generous space between the lines.

The offset grid can be useful if you want to leave one column blank for student notes or questions, or if you want to include a glossary, for example, alongside your text.



Single



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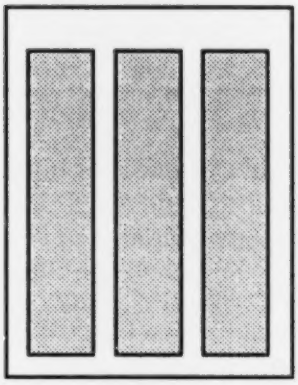
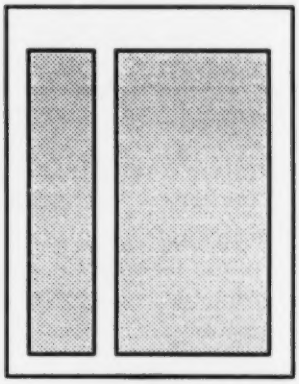


Triple



Offset

Design the type

A **typeface** is a all the characters (letters, numerals, punctuation marks, etc.) that form a particular style of type (for example, Helvetica). A **type family** is all the variations of a particular typeface design (Helvetica Italic, Helvetica Bold). The two basic kinds of typefaces are **serif** and **sans serif.**

This is serif type.

This is sans serif type.

Serif type has little "hooks" (serifs) on the ends of the letter strokes. These tiny lines guide the reader's eye from letter to letter. Serif type is almost always used in body copy, because it is the easiest to read for long periods of time.

Sans serif type doesn't have serifs. Because the letterforms are clear and bold, they are most often used in titles and headings, where they catch the reader's eye quickly.

A **font** is all the characters in a certain typeface of a given size. Type is measured in **points**, so an example of a font would be 12-point Helvetica.

Legibility depends on several factors.

Not all typefaces are equally legible. The **x-height** represents the size of the body of the letter, exclusive of ascenders and descenders (the parts of the letter which extend above and below the line). Typefaces with higher x-heights are more open and easier to read.

Times Roman has a high x-height.

Century Schoolbook has a low x-height.

Lower case type is much easier to read than upper case. Reserve upper case for banners and bulletin boards.

The size of the type affects legibility. Text for adults is generally set at 9 to 12 points. The type on this page is 11 point. 14-point type may be more comfortable for elementary children, or even 16-point for kindergarten and first grade.

Headings, subheadings, and body text should have at least 4 points difference in their sizes, but much more than four points becomes distracting.

The length of the line of type is crucial. Long lines make it difficult for the eye to track across the page and make it more

Design the type (Cont'd.)

likely that the reader will lose her place. A general rule of thumb is to make the line approximately 1 1/2 alphabets of the font you are using for your text.

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyzabcdefghijklm

The amount of space between lines, called **leading**, also affects legibility. Too little space makes the lines seem crowded together, but too much space can cause the reader to lose his place. Usually, typefaces with a high x-height need less space between the lines than ones with lower x-heights, because they are less dense.

A common rule for determining leading is to put two points between the lines of text set in the normal 9 to 12 point range. Thus lines of 9-point type would be set 11 points apart, 10-point type would be set 12 points apart, etc. The leading on this page is 14.

Justification of type (i.e., aligning the right margins) can create problems in legibility, because the typesetting program has to squeeze letters together on some lines and spread it apart on others in order to create this effect. The human eye is extraordinarily sensitive to variations in spacing, and it's difficult to have to adjust to different letterspacing on each line as you read. Justification is particularly difficult to achieve when type is set is narrow columns, which are otherwise easy to read.

Most typesetting programs offer some type of hyphenation, but be careful. It's usually based on a hyphenation algorithm, and can create some really strange divisions. Be sure to proofread carefully if you use automatic hyphenation.

Finally, consistency and predictability in typography relieve the reader of the burden of jumping from one style and size to another and enable her to concentrate all her attention on the content of the text. Choose one typeface for your headings, and another for your body text, and leave it at that. Don't let all the typefaces available on your system seduce you into the "ransom note" school of design.

Write to the design

The purpose of the design is to help the reader. Don't defeat the purpose.

That's why it's important to develop your design specifically for the material you want to present. Outline the material first, then design the page, then write the text. You may find that you need to modify the design as the text develops, but it's best to discipline yourself to write to the design. Remember, variations in the sizing and spacing of letters, words, and lines are distracting. Exceptions to the structure, i.e., a page with a heading that doesn't fit the established and expected pattern, are confusing.

Some examples of writing to the design of various types of materials are:

- A long reading passage might need chapter headings, section headings, and paragraph headings to help the reader follow understand how the material is organized. It should be presented in columns for comfortable reading.
- Worksheets shouldn't be too crowded. If there are too many items for one page, discard some or create a second page.
- Material that has blanks for students to fill in should be widely spaced with comfortable spaces for writing.
- Maps, charts and graphs should be presented with accompanying information on a clear, well-organized page. Size the graphics so that they are easy to read and contain all the necessary information, but be careful to weed out unnecessary, distracting details. Consider turning the page sideways to achieve a more effective layout.

Text that is written to illustrate the usage of certain words, i.e., this week's vocabulary lesson, is always stilted and awkward. In real writing, the idea dictates the words, not vice versa. We write because we have an idea we want to share. Make your ideas central to your lessons, and extract vocabulary and syntax examples from real text rather than trying to create text for illustration purposes. Write for your audience, not for your objectives.

Choose illustrations

Illustrations are often critical in designing effective ESOL materials. Pictures can be used to teach and test vocabulary knowledge, to stimulate conversation, and simply to make the material appealing.

If you need simple pictures of objects and actions, there are several ways to incorporate these into your text. If you can draw well enough, the easiest way is to leave space for them on your printed page and draw them in by hand with black ink. (If you can't draw, perhaps one of your students can.)

Most page layout programs will let you place **clip art** drawings on your page. There are a wide variety of clip art libraries available for both Mac and IBM computers. They are usually fairly expensive, however, and you end up buying illustrations you'll never use.

An alternative is to buy printed clip art from an art supply store, but the same problem exists in that you must buy a whole set of drawings at a time.

If you need pictures of complex situations to stimulate discussion, use photographs. Black and white photographs can be reproduced by photocopying or scanning. A good photograph can be photocopied, then enlarged or reduced with good results. Scanning means creating a digital image of the picture that you can manipulate with your computer. It gives you more control over the image, but it's more complex and expensive and beyond the scope of this presentation.

Adding illustrations to enhance visual appeal can be tricky. Scattering happy faces around the margins of a worksheet usually clutters up the page rather than making it more attractive. Some ideas that work are:

- Use a good-quality picture of a character that appeals to children—an elf or animal—somewhere on the page.
- Use an image of a pencil along with directions to write, or scissors along cutting lines.
- Add an illustration to a chapter heading.
- Place page numbers inside outlines of leaves, shamrocks, or some figure that relates to the theme of the page.
- Use a fancy typeface for titles.

Remember the key to this type of illustration is moderation. One per page is usually enough, and two is too much!

Samples

The following pages contain samples of materials illustrating various design ideas that were presented in the workshop. We hope you have enjoyed the presentation, and that you will have fun experimenting with what you have learned.

Index or Glossary

Use reverse type in bars so that sections can be found quickly. A sans serif typeface works best for this kind of heading. Place the entry word and page number or reference close together so that the reader won't get lost moving across the page. For a glossary that will be used often, a little extra space between entries will help the reader locate entry words more easily.

A

ability	tech
above	hyper-
above	epi-
above	super-, sur-
across	trans-
action	-ing
actual	real
after	post-
again	re-
against	anti-
against	contra, counter
agree	cord
ahead	vant
air	atmo
alike	simil, sym, syn
alone	sol
anger	rab, rag, rav
angle	gon
animal	zoo
answer	spond
area	-dom
area	plac
around	peri-
around	circum
ask	que, qui
away, away	ab-
away	de-
away, apart	se-
awe	vere

B

back	re-
backward	retro-
balance	libra
ball	sphere
be able	poss
bear	tol
beautiful	calla
before	ante-
before	pre-
before	vant
before	pro-
belief in	-ism
belief	dox
belief	religi
believe	cred
below	hypo-
bend	clen, cline
bend	flect, flex
bend	tors, tort
between	inter-
bind	stren, strict
bird	avis
birth	gen

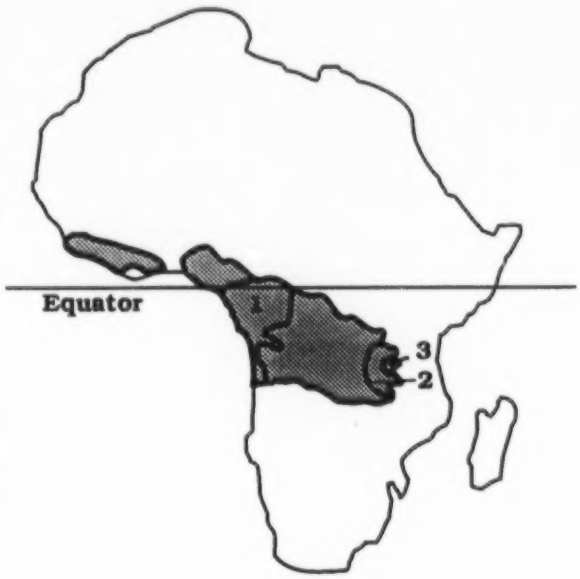
Map

Make sure your maps are the right size to illustrate your point. Don't include information that's irrelevant to the purpose of using the map. If you want students to write or draw on their copies, provide enough space for them to do so. If you want them to write a complete sentence, provide one or two lines that extend completely across the margins rather than three or four short lines.

Name:_____ Date:_____

Where Can We Find Them?

Below is a map of the continent of Africa. As you study the map, you will notice that it shows where gorillas and rain forests can be found in Africa.



Key African Rain Forest
1- Western Lowland Gorillas
2- Eastern Lowland Gorillas
3- Mountain Gorillas

1. Which is larger, the rain forest area in Africa or the area where we find gorillas in Africa?

_____

2. There are three types of gorillas in Africa. List the three types here.

_____

_____

_____

3. The type of gorilla most often found in zoos is the type with the largest range on this map. What type is it?

_____

4. The type of gorilla most in danger of extinction is the one with the smallest range on this map. What type is it?

_____

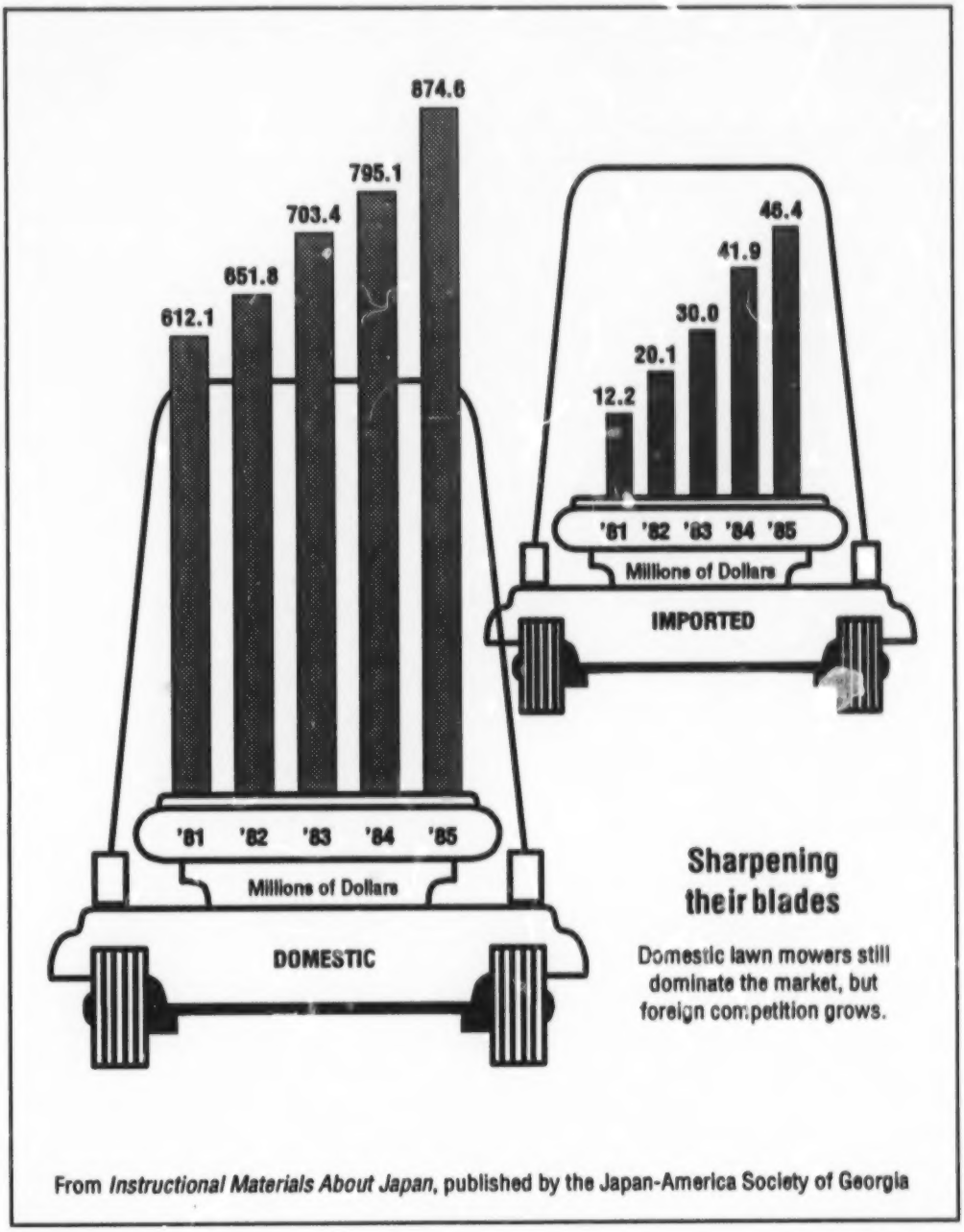
5. Scientists predict that all the rain forests of the world will be gone by the year 2032. What do you think will happen to the gorillas in Africa if this prediction comes true?

_____

From *Gorilla Learning Center Materials*, published by Southern Regional Council

Chart or Graph

Charts and graphs take a lot of planning. Sketch them out on graph paper before trying to lay them out on the computer, so you'll be sure to have enough space for all the elements. Keep them simple. Make sure that text and numbers don't get obscured by the graphics.

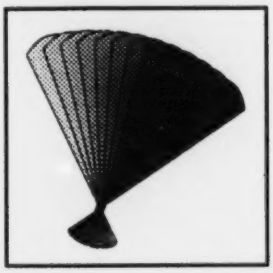


From *Instructional Materials About Japan*, published by the Japan-America Society of Georgia

Text

To "surface the structure" of your text means to make its organization obvious to the reader. Heads, subheads and text should be at least four points apart in size, with plenty of white space around them to set them off. Changing from roman to italic type can also help to make the transition. Use graphics to differentiate major heads and to add some interest to the page.

Activity 1



Japanese Women Today

A Time of Great Change

Today, some forty years after Japan's defeat in the Second World War, the general situation of Japanese women has been altered radically....Japan's democratic constitution of 1946 marked a major step toward equal opportunity for women, which has been further promoted by Japan's phenomenal economic development since the latter half of the 1950s. Great changes can be clearly seen in relationships at home, in education and in the workplace. Before examining these changes in detail, let us first consider their framework, the greatly altered life cycle of women.

The New Life Cycle

The Era of the 80-Year Lifespan

Among women born sixty years ago, less than half reached their sixtieth birthday. But among girl babies born in 1985, 93% can expect to celebrate a sixtieth birthday, 85% a seventieth and 63% an eightieth birthday. It is even likely that about 30% will celebrate their eighty-eighth birthday.

Such a jump in life expectancy can be attributed to improvement in the health and welfare systems and advances in medical science, together with an improvement in the general standard of living as a result of economic development. These have dramatically reduced death rates for the young, and also for the elderly.

This is the first time in history that the average lifespan of women has reached around eighty years, but with this change come new problems for the individual, the family and society as a whole.

Life Cycles in the Family Context

What lies ahead for the average Japanese woman married in 1985, at an average age of 25.5 years? First, her projected lifespan is 81 years.

The chart on page 9-5 shows that a wife is on average 2.7 years younger than her husband, that she will bear two children before the age of thirty, and that she will be fifty when her children finally become independent. Her husband will retire at sixty and she will spend the next sixteen years with him until he dies, after which

Set off examples apart from explanatory text. Use your sans serif typeface to highlight individual words. Add extra space between words and punctuation marks in order to call attention to them. Use extra white space to mark the end of sections when there are several on the page.

Lesson Page

Understanding Relationships 4A

Analogies, as you know, are relationships. Some word analogies are synonyms, words that mean the same thing. Other word analogies are antomyns, words that mean the opposite thing. These are antonyms:

good is the antonym of ***bad***

boy is the antonym of ***girl***

day is the antonym of ***night***

Many tests have analogy problems using antomyns. Here are more antonyms in analogies:

speak : listen :: good : bad

right : wrong :: boy : girl

man : woman :: day : night

sun : moon :: talk : hear

Some analogy tests have both antomyns missing. These tests and their correct answers can look like this:

speak : _____ ***:: talk :*** _____

a) talk—speak b) listen—hear c) girl—boy ___***b***___

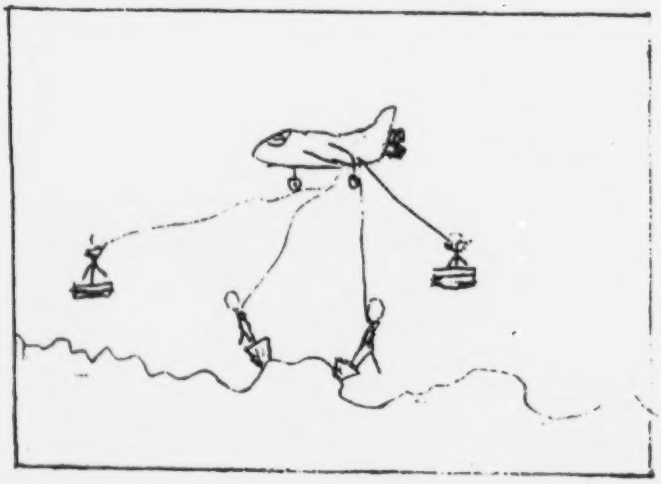
man : _____ ***:: boy :*** _____

a) right—wrong b) sun—moon c) woman—girl ___***c***___

From *English Across the Curriculum*, published by National Textbook Company

Student Book

If you want to produce books that your students have written, you have much more freedom of form. Browse through children's books to see how different authors and illustrators design pages. For adults, look at books and magazines that they enjoy to get design ideas. Be creative!



Then Russia thought more about destroying the land. So they made another bomb. The people on earth were scared. The people on the moon were cleaning up the moon and making it flat, because the earth would be gone. They wanted the people on the earth to move to the moon.

3